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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.



## DETAILED ACTION

### *Response to Arguments*

1. Applicant's arguments filed on 01/17/2006 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Regarding claims 1, 29 and 38, the Applicant alleged that the present claimed invention has been amended to include **“color amplifiers for generating a buffered color video signal from said readout pixel elements . . .”**. Careful inspection of Kozlowski '040 reveals that programmable amplifier element 50 is not used to generated a “buffered video signal” as taught in Applicant's claimed invention.

In response, the Examiner respectfully disagrees because the amplifier elements 50 connected at the output line 20 of the active pixel sensor (10) as shown in Figs. 2-4 are particularly used as part of Column buffer 40 (i.e., see Fig. 3) for generating a buffered color video signal (i.e., as discussed in col. 6, lines 65+ that the odd rows may begin at the left with red, green, then blue filters, and the even rows may begin with blue, red, then green filters, with these patterns repeating to fill the respective rows of the APS sensor to provide the color video signal at the output line 20, so that these color signals can be buffered by the column buffer amplifier 40/50 as shown in Figs. 2-4; also see col. 7, lines 15+ and col. 8, lines 23-45). In addition, Kozlowski '040 stated in col. 9, lines 15+ that “Fig. 4, an inverting amplifier (50) buffers the pixel signals  $V_n$  with variable, programmable gain . . .”, thus, it is cleared that the column buffer amplifiers (40/50) located at the output of the each pixel elements (10) can generate a buffered color video signal from the readout pixel/sensor elements (10) of the APS sensor.

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Further, the Applicant further stated, (i.e., see page 11 of the remarks) “programmable amplifier 50 described by Kozlowski ‘040 does not generate a buffered video signal output.”

In response, the Examiner respectfully disagrees because the amplifier 50 is part of column buffer 40 as shown in Figs. 3 and 4. In fact, Fig. 4 clearly show that the color video signals output from the Video Bus 20 is inputted to the column buffer 40, which contains the programmable amplifier 50 (i.e., see col. 8, lines 23+ and col. 9, lines 15+), thus, the output line 59 of the column buffer 40 having programmable amplifier 50 as shown in Fig. 4 is considered “a buffered color video signal” as required by present claimed invention (i.e., also see col. 9, lines 10-15 disclosed the buffered color video output to further buffer the video signal). In view of this, Kozlowski ‘040 clearly teaches the use of the color amplifiers (i.e., the elements 40/50 as shown in Figs 3 and 4) for generating a buffered color video signal for the readout pixel elements (i.e., the output line 20 of the pixel element 10) as amended by the applicant, thus, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention was made to modify the system of Hashimoto ‘085/Maenaka '023 as taught by Kozlowski ‘040, since Kozlowski ‘040 states at col. 5, lines 5+ that such a modification would normalize the amplified offset signal to suppress the temporal and spatial noise that would otherwise be generated by the column buffer .

In view of the above, the Examiner will maintain the rejections as follows:

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

2. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1, 3, 38, 43, 45 and 47 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto (U.S. 4,768,085) in view of Wilder et al. (U.S. 5,262,871) and Kozlowski et al. (U.S. 6,532,040 B1).

**Regarding claim 1**, Hashimoto '085 discloses a color imaging system providing on-the-fly color interpolation using analog signals to reconstruct colors during sensor readout (Fig. 3, col. 3, lines 55-68), the imaging system comprising:

an array of pixel sensor elements wherein at least part of the array is arranged in rows and columns (Fig. 1; col. 3, lines 40+);

a color filter including a plurality of color filter components organized in a predefined pattern, the color filter overlaying at least a portion of the array (i.e., noted from Figs. 1 and 4 that the color filter components are organized in a predefined pattern);

a readout control circuit coupled to the array (i.e., noted the element 2a as shown in Fig. 2; col. 4, lines 5+);

an array controller coupled to the array (i.e., see Fig. 2; col. 4, lines 5+);

wherein the readout control circuit (2a) and the array controller (2a, 2a1 and 2a2) are configured to simultaneously read out values for a group of pixel elements from two different rows and two pixel elements from two different columns (i.e., Figs. 2, 7 and 12; col. 3, lines 54+, and col. 5, lines 60+) and

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to reconstruct color components for at least a first pixel sensor element and a second pixel sensor element using color information (i.e., noted that the G signal is reconstructed from the pixels signals such as G1 and G2 as shown in Figs. 2 and 3) from other pixels elements (i.e., noted the pixel elements nH/mH as shown in Fig. 1) within at least the first portion of the array while the readout control circuit is reading said first portion of the array (i.e., col. 4, lines 20+ and col. 5, lines 1+).

In addition, it is noted that although Hashimoto '085 shows the readout control circuit (Fig. 2, the elements 2a) generating the specific reading pattern while the readout control circuit enables sub-sampling the sensor array (i.e., see Figs. 1 and 2, noted the Odd/Even sub-sampling read out), Hashimoto '085 does not explicitly stated the readout control circuit capable of sub-sampling (i.e., reading) by skipping pixel elements along horizontal or vertical direction of the array as amended in present claimed invention.

However, the above-mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Wilder '871. In particular, Wilder '871 teaches that it is conventionally well-known in the art at the time of the invention was made to program the readout control circuit (i.e., noted the readout control circuit as shown in Fig. 1 of Wilder '871) for the purpose of selectively sub-sampling by skipping pixel elements along horizontal or vertical direction to create a lower resolution image (i.e., noted that the groups of pixel elements as shown in Figs. 2 may be selectively sampled by skipping pixel elements along row/column direction of the sensor array during the specific resolution mode as discussed in col. 2, lines 50-55 and col. 6, lines 50+; see col. 3, lines 20+ and col. 6, lines 2+ of Wilder '871).

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In view of the above, having the system of Hashimoto '085 and then given the well-established teaching of Wilder '871, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Hashimoto '085 as taught by Wilder '871, since Wilder '871 states at col. 2, lines 50+ that such a modification would achieve high speed data capture rate for high frame rates thereof.

Furthermore, it is noted that although Hashimoto '085 shows the use of a plurality of color amplifiers (i.e., noted from Fig. 3 that each of the amplifiers 3, 4 and 5 are corresponding to one the colors of light), Hashimoto '085 does not explicitly state that the amplifier generates a buffered color signal from the readout pixel elements and has a programmable gain and contained within the array of pixel sensors as recited in the present claimed invention.

However, the above-mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Kozlowski '040. In particular, Kozlowski '040 teaches in order to suppress the to suppress the temporal and spatial noise, it is conventionally well-known in the art to use a plurality of color amplifiers (i.e., noted the programmable amplifiers 50 of the column buffer 40 as shown in Figs. 3 and 4) each corresponding to one of the colors (i.e., noted from col. 6, lines 65+, the CMOS sensor array contains R, G and B color filter, thus, R, G and B signals are read out from the pixels array 10 as shown in Figs. 3 and 4) of lights wherein each of the color amplifiers (i.e., noted that the column buffer 40 as shown in Fig. 2-4 contains the programmable amplifier 50 for generating a buffered color video signal to the output line 59) generate a buffered color video signal (i.e., as discussed in col. 6, lines 65+ that the odd rows may begin at the left with red, green, then blue filters, and the even rows may begin with blue, red, then green

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filters, with these patterns repeating to fill the respective rows of the APS sensor to provide the color video signal at the output line 20, so that these color signals can be buffered by the column buffer amplifier 40/50 as shown in Figs. 2-4; also see col. 7, lines 15+ and col. 8, lines 23-45) from the readout pixel elements (i.e., noted the readout bus line 20 of the pixel elements 10 as shown in Figs. 2-4), and has a programmable gain (i.e., col. 8, lines 23+, col. 9, lines 15+; see Figs. 3 and 4) and contained within the array of pixel sensors (i.e., noted that the programmable amplifier 50 is contained within the pixel circuitry 40 of the sensor array 10 of the CMOS; see Figs. 3 and 4; col. 7, lines 10+ and col. 9, lines 50+) as recited in the present claimed invention.

In view of the above, having the system of Hashimoto '085 and then given the well-established teaching of Kozlowski '040, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Hashimoto '085 as taught by Kozlowski '040, since Kozlowski '040 states at col. 5, lines 5+ that such a modification would normalize the amplified offset signal to suppress the temporal and spatial noise that would otherwise be generated by the column buffer .

**Regarding claim 3**, Hashimoto '085 discloses wherein the readout control circuit is adapted to perform color interpolation using two pixel sensor elements read out in parallel (i.e., col. 3, lines 60+ and col. 6, lines 14+).

**Regarding claim 43**, it is noted that Hashimoto '085 does not explicitly states the use of CMOS Sensor, however, Kozlowski '040 teaches that it is conventionally well-known in the art at the time the invention was made to use CMOS sensors in order to realize low read noise (i.e., see col. 6, lines 50-36 of Kozlowski '040). In view of this, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of

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Hashimoto '085 as at least taught by Kozlowski '040, since Kozlowski '040 states at col. 6, lines 30+ that such a modification would achieve low read noise comparable or superior to CCD system. In addition, Wilder '871 also teaches that it is well known in the art to use the CCD or CMOS sensor in the camera device (i.e., see col. 10, lines 55+ of Wilder '871).

**Regarding claim 45**, although Hashimoto '085 teaches the use of a control circuit is programmed to selectively reading groups of pixel elements to create a color reconstruction (i.e., noted Figs. 1 and 2 of Hashimoto '085), Hashimoto '085 does not explicitly state that the readout control circuit is programmed to selectively skip some of the groups of pixel elements to create a lower resolution.

However, the above-mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Wilder '871. In particular, Wilder '871 teaches that it is conventionally well-known in the art at the time of the invention was made to program the readout control circuit (i.e., noted the readout control circuit as shown in Fig. 1 of Wilder '871) for the purpose of selectively skip some of the groups of pixel elements to create a lower resolution image (i.e., i.e., noted that the groups of pixel elements as shown in Figs. 2 may be selectively skipped during the specific resolution mode as discussed in col. 6, lines 50+; see col. 3, lines 20+ and col. 6, lines 2+ of Wilder '871).

In addition, Kozlowski '040 also teaches that the readout control circuit of the CMOS sensor can be programmed to selectively skip some of the groups of pixel elements, such that the groups of pixel elements can be selectively readout (i.e., "Windowing" as discussed in col. 10, lines 20+) to create a lower resolution color image reconstruction, and this feature simplifies support electronics to reduce cost and match the needs of the particular communication medium.

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In view of the above, having the system of Hashimoto '085 and then given the well-established teaching of Wilder '871/Kozlowski '040, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Hashimoto '085 as taught by Wilder '871/Kozlowski '040, since Wilder '871 states at col. 2, lines 50+ that such a modification would achieve high speed data capture rate for high frame rates; and Kozlowski '040 further suggests in col. 10, lines 35+ such a modification would reduce cost and match the needs of the particular communication medium (i.e., During teleconferencing the Window around a person's mouth could be supplied more frequently than the entire image out of the sensor).

**Regarding claim 38**, Hashimoto '085 discloses a color imager (i.e., Figs. 3, 5, 8 and 10) comprising:

a first light sensor that generates a first analog output signal related to the amount of a first color of light sensed (i.e., noted the sensor of the sensor 2 of the imager generates the first analog output signal such that the green signal G1 as shown in Fig. 8 and 9; see col. 6, lines 10+);

a second light sensor that generates a second analog output signal related the amount of said first color of light sensed (i.e., noted the sensor of the sensor 2 of the imager generates the first analog output signal such that the green signal G3 as shown in Fig. 8 and 9; see col. 6, lines 10+);

a third light sensor (i.e., The Blue sensor of the sensor 2) which generates a third analog output signal related to the amount of a second color of light sensed (i.e., noted the sensor of the

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sensor 2 of the imager generates the third analog output signal such that the blue signal B2 as shown in Fig. 8 and 9; see col. 6, lines 10+);

a fourth light sensor (i.e., The Red sensor of the sensor 2) which generates a fourth analog output signal related to the amount of a third color of light sensed (i.e., noted the sensor of the sensor 2 of the imager generates a fourth analog output signal such that the red signal R as shown in Fig. 8 and 9; see col. 6, lines 10+);

a circuit configured to read out the first, second, third, and fourth analog values at the same time (i.e., col. 3, lines 55-68 and col. 5, lines 60+); and

an interpolation circuit configured to receive said first output signal and said second output signal (i.e., col. 3, lines 55+), wherein said interpolation circuit provides an interpolation signals on the fly based on at least said first analog output signal and said second analog output signal (col. 6, lines 5+).

In addition, it is noted that although Hashimoto '085 shows the readout control circuit (Fig. 2, the elements 2a) generating the specific reading pattern while the readout control circuit enables sub-sampling the sensor array (i.e., see Figs. 1 and 2, noted the Odd/Even sub-sampling read out), Hashimoto '085 does not explicitly stated the readout control circuit capable of sub-sampling (i.e., reading) by skipping pixel elements along horizontal or vertical direction of the array as amended in present claimed invention.

However, the above-mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Wilder '871. In particular, Wilder '871 teaches that it is conventionally well-known in the art at the time of the invention was made to program the readout control circuit (i.e., noted the readout control circuit as shown in Fig. 1 of Wilder '871) for the purpose of

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selectively sub-sampling by skipping pixel elements along horizontal or vertical direction to create a lower resolution image (i.e., noted that the groups of pixel elements as shown in Figs. 2 may be selectively sampled by skipping pixel elements along row/column direction of the sensor array during the specific resolution mode as discussed in col. 2, lines 50-55 and col. 6, lines 50+; see col. 3, lines 20+ and col. 6, lines 2+ of Wilder '871).

In view of the above, having the system of Hashimoto '085 and then given the well-established teaching of Wilder '871, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Hashimoto '085 as taught by Wilder '871, since Wilder '871 states at col. 2, lines 50+ that such a modification would achieve high speed data capture rate for high frame rates thereof.

Furthermore, it is noted that although Hashimoto '085 shows the use of a plurality of color amplifiers (i.e., noted from Fig. 3 that each of the amplifiers 3, 4 and 5 are corresponding to one the colors of light), Hashimoto '085 does not explicitly state that the amplifier for generating a buffered color video signal from the light sensors and has a programmable gain and contained within the array of pixel sensors as recited in the present claimed invention.

However, the above-mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Kozlowski '040. In particular, Kozlowski '040 teaches in order to suppress the to suppress the temporal and spatial noise, it is conventionally well-known in the art to use a plurality of color amplifiers (i.e., noted the programmable amplifiers 50 of the column buffer 40 as shown in Figs. 3 and 4) each corresponding to one of the colors (i.e., noted from col. 6, lines 65+, the CMOS sensor array contains R, G and B color filter, thus, R, G and B signals are read out from the pixels array 10 as shown in Figs. 3 and 4) of lights wherein each of the color

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amplifiers (i.e., noted that the column buffer 40 as shown in Fig. 2-4 contains the programmable amplifier 50 for generating a buffered color video signal to the output line 59) generate a buffered color video signal (i.e., as discussed in col. 6, lines 65+ that the odd rows may begin at the left with red, green, then blue filters, and the even rows may begin with blue, red, then green filters, with these patterns repeating to fill the respective rows of the APS sensor to provide the color video signal at the output line 20, so that these color signals can be buffered by the column buffer amplifier 40/50 as shown in Figs. 2-4; also see col. 7, lines 15+ and col. 8, lines 23-45) from the light sensors (i.e., noted the readout bus line 20 of the pixel sensors 10 as shown in Figs. 2-4), and has a programmable gain (i.e., col. 8, lines 23+, col. 9, lines 15+; see Figs. 3 and 4) and contained within the array of pixel sensors (i.e., noted that the programmable amplifier 50 is contained within the pixel circuitry 40 of the sensor array 10 of the CMOS; see Figs. 3 and 4; col. 7, lines 10+ and col. 9, lines 50+) as recited in the present claimed invention.

In view of the above, having the system of Hashimoto '085 and then given the well-established teaching of Kozlowski '040, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Hashimoto '085 as taught by Kozlowski '040, since Kozlowski '040 states at col. 5, lines 5+ that such a modification would normalize the amplified offset signal to suppress the temporal and spatial noise that would otherwise be generated by the column buffer .

Regarding claim 47, please see the Examiner's comments with respect to claim 43 as discussed above.

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4. Claims 44 and 48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto '085 in view of Wilder '871 and Kozlowski '040 as applied to claims discussed above, and further in view of Lee et al. (U.S. 6,466,265 B1).

**Regarding claim 44**, although Hashimoto '085 and Kozlowski '040 shows the use of color filter components (i.e., col. 4, lines 5+ of Hashimoto '085; see col. 6, lines 60+ of Kozlowski '040), Hashimoto '085 does not explicitly state the use of a Bayer pattern color filter as recited in the present claimed invention.

However, Lee '265 teaches that it is conventionally well-known in the art at the time of the invention was made to use a Bayer pattern color filter as recited in the present claimed invention (i.e., col. 3, lines 20+ of Lee '265). In view of this, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Hashimoto '085 as taught by Lee '265, since Lee '265 states at col. 1, lines 50+ that such a modification would achieve high pixels output rate for high frame rates thereof.

Regarding claim 48, please see the Examiner's comments with respect to claim 44 as discussed above.

5. Claims 29 and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maenaka et al. (U.S. 5,555,023) in view of Wilder et al. (U.S. 5,262,871) and Kozlowski '040.

Regarding claim 29, Maenaka '023 discloses a method of interpolating color components of an array of pixel sensor elements (col. 3, lines 40+ and col. 6, lines 45+), said method comprising:

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reading a first rectangular portion of an array of pixel sensor elements simultaneously, wherein the first rectangular portion includes pixel sensor elements from at least two array columns and two array rows (i.e., Fig. 8; col. 1, lines 45-50, col. 2, lines 45+);

reading a second rectangular portion of the array of pixel sensor elements, wherein the second portion partly overlaps said first portion (i.e., Fig. 8; col. 1, lines 45+ and col. 2, lines 45+); and

reconstructing color components using interpolation for at least a third portion of the array while said third portion of the array is being read (i.e., Figs. 2 and 8-9; col. 2, lines 35+, col. 6, lines 35+ and col. 7, lines 20+), and wherein said interpolation comprises summing values of two or more said pixel sensor elements (i.e., see Fig. 2, the elements 269-270 and col. 6, lines 10-60).

In addition, it is noted that although Maenaka '023 shows the reading of the first and second rectangular portions (i.e., see Fig. 8) is controlled by the readout control circuit (Fig. 1, the elements 30 and 31) generating the specific reading pattern while the readout control circuit is reading the first and second portions of the sensor array (i.e., see Figs. 1, 4 and 8).

**Moreover, Maenaka '023 clearly shown in Fig. 8 that the reading of the first and second rectangular portions (i.e., noted the rectangular portion of ODD pixel field and EVEN pixel fields) is by skipping pixel elements (i.e., noted that when the rectangular portion of "B" ODD pixel field is read out, three rows/columns on the sensor array "A" is skipped to produce 3 x 3 ODD filed, and the same goes for the pixel block "C" thru "E" as well) along horizontal or vertical directions of said array (i.e., noted input sensor array A of Fig. 8).**

Furthermore, it is noted that Maenaka '023 does not explicitly states the use of CMOS Sensors, however, Wilder '871 teaches that it is conventionally well-known in the art at the time the invention was made to use CMOS Sensors in the camera to achieve a maximum speed of operation and a minimum power dissipation thereof (i.e., see col. 10, lines 30+ of Wilder '871). In view of this, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Maenaka '023 as taught by Wilder '871, since Wilder '871 states at column 10, lines 30+ that such a modification would provide a maximum speed of operation and a minimum power dissipation in the imaging system.

Moreover, it is noted that although Maenaka '023 shows the use of a plurality of color amplifiers (noted the amplifiers located within the sensor 1) for reading of said first and second portions (i.e., See Fig. 8 of Maenaka '023), Maenaka '023 does not explicitly show plurality of color amplifiers for generating a buffered color video signal from the readout pixel elements, and wherein said amplifiers are placed within the array of pixel sensor elements as recited in present claimed invention.

However, the above-mentioned claimed limitations are well known in the art as evidenced by Kozlowski '040. In particular, Kozlowski '040 teaches in order to suppress the to suppress the temporal and spatial noise, it is conventionally well-known in the art to use a plurality of color amplifiers (i.e., noted the programmable amplifiers 50 of the column buffer 40 of the pixel circuitry as shown in Figs. 3 and 4; also noted that each pixel 10 in a column contains a column buffer 40, thus, row N x column M of CMOS sensor must contain plurality of color amplifiers as required by present claimed invention) generate a buffered color video signal (i.e., noted that the column buffer 40 as shown in Fig. 2-4 contains the programmable amplifier

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50 for generating a buffered color video signal to the output line 59; also see col. 7, lines 15+ and col. 8, lines 23-45) from the readout pixel elements (i.e., noted the readout bus line 20 of the pixel elements 10 as shown in Figs. 2-4) and contained within the array of pixel sensors (i.e., noted that the programmable amplifier 50 is contained within the pixel circuitry 40 of the sensor array 10 of the CMOS; see Figs. 3 and 4; col. 7, lines 10+ and col. 9, lines 50+) as recited in the present claimed invention. In addition, Kozlowski '040 teaches that plurality of color amplifiers (40/50) of M x N array is used during the reading process of particular portions (i.e., noted that "Windowing" for reading a selective group of pixels as discussed in col. 10, lines 25+ and reading Row N, and Row N+1 of all of the pixels 10 from the sensor as shown in Fig. 5)

In view of the above, having the system of Hashimoto '085 and then given the well-established teaching of Kozlowski '040, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Hashimoto '085 as taught by Kozlowski '040, since Kozlowski '040 states at col. 5, lines 5+ that such a modification would normalize the amplified offset signal to suppress the temporal and spatial noise that would otherwise be generated by the column buffer .

Regarding claim 31, Maenaka '023 discloses wherein reconstructing color components (i.e., the R, G and B signal as shown in Fig. 8) using interpolation is performed in real-time (i.e., noted the color components are interpolated as read out from the image sensor in real-time as claimed).

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6. Claim 46 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Maenaka '023 in view of Wilder '871 and Kozlowski '040 as applied to claims discussed above, and further in view of Lee at al. (U.S. 6,466,265).

Regarding claim 46, although Maenaka '023 shows the use of color filter components (i.e., Fig. 8 of Maenaka '023), Maenaka '023 does not explicitly state the use of a Bayer pattern color filter as recited in the present claimed invention.

However, Lee '265 teaches that it is conventionally well-known in the art at the time of the invention was made to use a Bayer pattern color filter as recited in the present claimed invention (i.e., col. 3, lines 20+ of Lee '265).

In view of this, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the system of Maenaka '023 as taught by Lee '265, since Lee '265 states at col. 1, lines 50+ that such a modification would achieve high pixels output rate for high frame rates thereof.

### ***Conclusion***

7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period

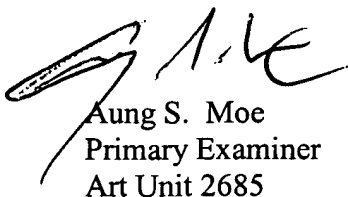
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will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Aung S. Moe whose telephone number is 571-272-7314. The examiner can normally be reached on Flex.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward F. Urban can be reached on 571-272-7899. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Aung S. Moe  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2685

A. Moe  
March 21, 2006